INTRODUCTION TO THE *"TREATISE ON THE DEMONSTRATION OF ACTION"* (*KARMASIDDHIPRAKARAṆA*) OF VASUBANDHU

by
Étienne Lamotte

(Translators into English: Gelong Lodrö Sangpo and Gelongma Migme Chödrön)

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A. *HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINES OF ACTION (KARMA)*[1]

The doctrine of action, of Karman, forms the keystone of the entire Buddhist edifice: action is the fundamental explanation of sentient beings and of the receptacle world, and it is in accordance with action or Karman that the Buddhist scholars have built their philosophy. <152>

AA. *THE CANONICAL DOCTRINE*

The teaching of Karma was fixed as early as the first Buddhist documents: the Maghadan proto-canon (*Vinaya Piṭaka* or 'Discipline', *Sūtra Piṭaka* or 'Discourses'), the Pāḷi Canon inaugurated by the communities of Kauśāmbi-Sañchī-Mālava, and the Sanskrit Canon of the communities centered around the Yamunā and in the Northeast.

This very simple doctrine can be expressed in a few words:

1. Action is mind, intention.

Contrary to what the early thinkers, or even the Jains believed, action is not a material substance; the offense is not a fluid, a sickness which one should 'wash away' through ritual baths in sacred rivers or 'burn up' through penance or the fast. Action is essentially mind, intentional, conscious, and consequently morally qualifiable (good or bad). We read in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, iii. 415:

> *cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi, cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā*:
>
> "Monks, I say that action is intention; subsequent to intention, one accomplishes action by means of body, speech and mind."

We can thus distinguish two or three types of action:

i) two actions: 'action of intention' (*cetanākarman*) and 'action subsequent to intention' (*cetayitvā karman*);

ii) three actions: mental action (*manaḥkarman*) = 'action of intention'; bodily action (*kāyakarman*) and vocal action (*vākkarman*), that are 'action subsequent to intention' (see translation, § 1, n. 3).

2. Action produces a ripened effect (*vipākaphala*) either in this life, or in a future life.

The Buddha is categorical about this:

> *na praṇaśyanti karmāṇi kalpakoṭiśatair api*
>
> *sāmagrīm prāpya kālaṃ ca phalanti khalu dehinām*
>
> "Actions do not perish, even after hundreds of millions of cosmic aeons. When the complex [of conditions] and the [favorable] time come together, they bear an effect for their author (*dehinām*)" (§ 15, note 48). <153>

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[1] The references in round parentheses are to the paragraphs and to the notes of the translation of the *Karmasiddhi* which follows. – See in particular L. de La Vallée Poussin, "*La négation de l'âme et la doctrine de I'acte*, *Nouvelles recherches sur la doctrine de I'acte*" (*JA*, 1902, pp. 237-306; 1903, pp. 357-450), *Morale bouddhique*, Paris, 1927.

The original French page numbers are given in pointed brackets.

This means that the retribution of action is certain: there is a necessary connection (*karmaphalasaṃbandha*) between an action and its effect. But this connection is not always immediate: action does not necessarily bear its effect in this life; more frequently, it gives forth its effect in the course of a future existence. If we thus suppose that action is done, then there will be transmigration or cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*) during which the ripened effect (*vipākaphala*), agreeable or disagreeable, will appear.

3. Actions bear an effect for their author.

Actions bear an effect for their author, or more exactly, where it has been done. In other words, there is a ripened entity.

* * * * *

This doctrine, so simple in appearance, poses three complicated problems which Buddhist scholasticism resolved in different ways.

AAA. *THE NATURE OF ACTION.*

Everyone agrees on the nature of mental action: it is intention, pure and simple. But of what exactly do bodily and vocal actions, which constitute 'action subsequent to intention' of which the Buddha spoke, consist? It is accepted that they are preceded by or produced through intention, but their intrinsic nature is the subject of discussion.

i) For some, they are form or matter (*rūpa*) distinct from intention (thesis of the Vaibhāṣikas);

ii) for others, they are a simple movement (*gati*): act of the body, and emission of speech or phonation (thesis of the Vātsīputrīyas); and, finally,

iii) for others, a special type of intention: an intention that moves the body and speech (thesis of the Sautrāntikas).

iv) As for the Mādhyamikas, on the absolute truth level, they do not admit any intrinsic nature to action (*karma*).

AAB. *THE MECHANISM OF RETRIBUTION.*

It is accepted that an action 'done' gives forth an effect. The Mādhyamikas deny that action is ever really done and so avoid the problem of its retribution. But the Buddhist scholars for whom action is really done, should accept its retribution and should explain it. They ask if action still exists when it bears an effect.

i) Some say that [the intrinsic nature of] action is permanent, that it gives forth its effect when it is <154> past (thesis of the Sarvāstivādins).

ii) Others claim that it perishes immediately upon being done, but leaves after it a 'non-disappearance' (*avipraṇāśa*) of itself, a claim for its retribution (thesis of the Vātsiputrīyas), or else,

iii) others launch a complicated process of transformation (*pariṇāma*), the culminating point of which is a state of the retribution (thesis of the Sautrāntikas).

AAC. *THE NATURE OF THE RIPENED ENTITY.*

If action is never 'done', there will be no retribution and it is useless to discuss the nature of a ripened entity (position of the Madhyamaka). But, if one accepts the fact of retribution, one must define the intrinsic nature of the agent (*kartṛ*) and of the enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*) who will 'eat' the ripened effect.

i) Some see in [the agent and the enjoyer] a real entity, a soul (a Vātsīputrīya thesis);

ii) others [see in the agent and the enjoyer] a continued and unceasingly renewed stream (*saṃtāna*) of momentary (*kṣaṇika*) psychophysical aggregates (*skandha*).

One may ask how this stream transmigrates and conforms itself to the retribution.

i) For some, it 'eats' the effect after having 'possessed' (*prāpti*) it since the completion of the action (thesis of the Vaibhāṣikas).

ii) For others, the action—at the moment when it is 'done'—has 'perfumed' (*vāsanā*) the stream by depositing a seed (*bīja*) in it, by causing in it an internal transformation (*saṃtānaparināma*) the culminating point or distinctive characteristic (*viśeṣa*) of which is a state of the retribution (thesis of the Sautrāntikas).

iii) Another group of scholars sees in this stream a subconscious storehouse-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*), comparable to a river whose unchanging but unceasingly renewing waters carry along the traces of its conscious life which it sustains and reproduces in an uninterrupted cycle (thesis of the Sūtrapramāṇikas and Vijñānavādins).

AB. THE SARVĀSTIVĀDIN-VAIBHĀṢIKA SCHOOL

All these problems, susceptible to such differing solutions, are raised in the Abhidharmapiṭaka which the Sarvāstivādin School of the Northwest added to the Sanskrit Canon. Among its seven <155> Abhidharma books, written towards the beginning of our era by historical or semi-historical scholars, it is suitable here to mention above all the *Karmaprajñapti*, the third part of the *Prajñaptiśāstra* (see *Kośa*, Introduction, pp. xxxvii-viii), as well as the controversy on Time and on the Pudgala in the *Vijñānakāya* of Deśavarman (*Études asiatiques*, Paris, 1925, I, pp. 343-76).

A commentary on the first of these [seven] Abhidharma books, the *Vibhāṣā*, presents the official doctrines of the Sarvāstivādins of Kaśmīr towards the end of the second century of our era. The *Vibhāṣā* scholars, or Vaibhāṣikas, heirs of the Sarvāstivādins, elaborated some moral theories, and we need here to bring together the references scattered in the Introduction and in the Index of the *Kośa* under the entries Vasumitra, Ghoṣaka, Buddhadeva, Dharmatrāta, the Bhadanta, etc.

In their summaries on the *Vibhāṣā*, the scholars Dharmaśrī, Upaśānta and Dharmatrāta are especially interested in the problem of the nature of action (see *Kośa*, Introduction, pp. lxv-vii); but all of these summaries have been eclipsed by the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu (fourth century?), the 'Summa' par excellence of the Foundational Vehicle (Hīnayāna) of Buddhism. Chapter iv of the *Kośa* is devoted to a study of action. We find, in chapters ii and v, precise information on the mechanism of bearing an effect. Finally, chapter ix studies the transmigrating entity. The *Kośa* was commented upon at length and, eventually, amended by a later scholastic (Saṃghabhadra).

ABA. THE NATURE OF ACTION.

The Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas enlarged upon the threefold division of action set up in the canon: they tried to incorporate it into their classification of entities into five aggregates (*skandha*) and twelve sense-sources (*āyatana*).

Mental action (*manaḥkarman*) is solely 'intention' (*cetanā*), i.e., a mental event (a certain mental factor) (*caittadharma*) that accompanies the mind (*citta*) <156> and that gives (*abhisaṃskṛ-*) [the mind] a morally good or bad nature (*Morale bouddhique*, pp. 136-137).

Bodily action (*kāyakarman*) and vocal action (*vākkarman*) are produced through intention, but are not themselves intention. Both can be information/manifest action (*vijñapti*) or non-information/unmanifest action (*avijñapti*),[2] depending on whether they do or do not inform about or manifest the intention from which they proceed, to others.

ABA.1. BODILY MANIFEST ACTION (VIJÑAPTI).

This is an act of the body (*viṣpanda*, *śarīraceṣṭā*), a 'shape' (*saṃsthāna*) that is produced through intention and that informs others about this intention.

[2] Both Louis de La Vallée Poussin and Étienne Lamotte translate *vijñapti* into French as 'information' and *avijñapti* as 'non-information'. In modern scholarship these terms have often been translated as manifest action and unmanifest action. In general, we will do likewise, however, in some contexts, we will use both terms occasionally.

This is a shape: a dimension, long, short, etc., distinct from 'color' (*varṇa*) with which it forms the 'sense-source of visible form' (*rūpāyatana*), that itself is classified in the aggregate of form (*rūpaskandha*) together with sound, etc. – Produced directly through intention, this shape is distinguished from all other shapes: the dimensions of inanimate objects, reflexes, etc. – Finally, this shape of the body informs about the intention from which it proceeds: a murderous act informs us about the murderous intention which has launched it. It will thus be called 'bodily information' or 'bodily manifest action' (*vijñapti*) (§ 2, n. 8).

ABA.2. *VOCAL MANIFEST ACTION (VIJÑAPTI).*

This is the distinct pronunciation of syllables (*vyaktavarṇoccaraṇa*). It forms part of the sense-source of sound (*śabdāyatana*) that itself is classified in the aggregate of form (*rūpaskandha*). 'Speech' is produced through intention and informs about this intention: the order to kill proceeds from a murderous intention and causes us to know of this intention.

ABA.3. *UNMANIFEST ACTION (AVIJÑAPTI).*

This is bodily or vocal action which makes nothing known to anyone. Some examples will be useful here (see translation, § 14, n. 36).

1. By presenting oneself before the community and by undertaking the solemn commitment to abstain from killing, stealing, etc., the future nun accomplishes a bodily and vocal manifest action (*vijñapti*). At this very moment there arises in her a continuous action called 'discipline' (*saṃvara*) or 'the abstention from an offense' (*virati*) which makes a nun of her, even when she does not think of her vows. This continuous and invisible action, <157> that makes nothing known to anyone, is called 'non-information' or 'unmanifest action' (*avijñapti*).

2. By promising to live by killing or by stealing and by preparing his weapons, a man accomplishes a vocal and bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*). At this very moment there arises in him continuous action called 'indiscipline' (*asaṃvara*) or 'consent to an offense' (*avirati*), which makes him a murderer or a thief, even if circumstances hinder him from exercising his trade. This continuous and invisible action, that makes nothing known to anyone, is called 'non-information' or 'unmanifest action' *avijñapti*.

3. By giving Paul the order to kill, Peter commits a vocal manifest action (*vijñapti*): he has been ordered to kill, but he is not yet a murderer. When he obeys, Paul commits a bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*), killing. At this very moment, Peter may be asleep or distracted; nevertheless, as soon as his order is accomplished by Paul, Peter himself becomes a murderer: a continuous action arises in him, an action that no one sees and that, for this reason, is called 'non-information' or 'unmanifest action' (*avijñapti*).

Unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) is called 'bodily unmanifest action' or 'vocal unmanifest action' depending on whether the manifest action (*vijñapti*) from whence it proceeds is a bodily or a vocal action.

Posited in this way, the Vaibhāṣikas define non-information/unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) as a continuous action, invisible but material, that makes nothing known or manifests nothing to somebody else, but that remains with its author, whether the latter is distracted or momentarily without mind.

This action is invisible and, as such, solely 'cognized' by the mental consciousness: it is thus included within the sense-source of factors (*dharmāyatana*) together with sensation, identification

and the conditioned factors. On the other hand, [unmanifest action] is form, and forms part of the aggregate of form (*rūpaskandha*), because the bodily and vocal manifest action (*vijñapti*) from whence it proceeds are matter, or because the fundamental material elements upon which [unmanifest action] depends are material (§ 14, n. 38).

Whereas manifest action (*vijñapti*) can be good, bad or indeterminate (*avyākṛta*), unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) is never indeterminate, but can only be good or bad (§ 14, n. 43).

There are three types of unmanifest action (*avijñapti*):

(1) discipline (*saṃvara*) or abstention <158> from an offense (*virati*),

(2) indiscipline (*asaṃvara*) or consent to an offense (*avirati*), and

(3) unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) that is different from discipline and from indiscipline (§ 14, n. 37).

The genesis of discipline is not the same in all the realms:

i) Here, in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), discipline always results from a bodily or vocal manifest action (*vijñapti*): by a formal commitment, a person creates in him- or herself a continuous unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) which makes him or her a *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī*, a *bhikṣuṇī* in training, a novice monk or nun or a pious layman or laywoman.

ii) On the contrary, in the higher realm of form (*rūpadhātu*), discipline operates in conformity with mind (*cittanuparivartin*) that is strong enough to create discipline by itself, without the intervention of a manifest action (*vijñapti*) (§ 14, n. 39).

ABB. *THE MECHANISM OF RETRIBUTION.*

The Buddha said that action does not perish; consequently the Sarvāstivādins, whence their name 'Those who affirm the existence of everything', believe that everything exists at all times, that past entities and future entities exist. Action itself, considered in its intrinsic nature (*svabhāva* or *svalakṣaṇa*), exists at all times, but its present, past or future mode of existence (*bhāva*, Chin. *lei-yeou*) varies. Hence the stanza of the *Kośa*, v, p. 58:

> *svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cāsti bhāvo nityaś ca neṣyate*,
>
> "The intrinsic nature exists always, but this does not mean that its mode of existence is permanent" (see MCB v, p. 110).

According to the School, permanent action, during its present existence, at the moment in which it is accomplished, 'projects' (*ākṣipati*) or 'seizes' (*pratigṛhṇāti*) its effect: it becomes the cause of the effect (*hetubhāvenopatiṣṭhate*), it establishes (*vyavasthāpayati*) the effect in such a way that it arises later.

This same permanent action, during its past existence, when it is past, 'gives forth' (*prayacchati*) its result: at the moment when the future effect turns towards arising, is ready for arising (*utpādābhimukha*), the former action gives it the force which causes it to enter into the condition of the present (§ 15, n. 45). <159>

ABC. *THE RIPENED ENTITY.*

In accordance with the general tendencies of the Canon, the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas do not think that the agent destined to 'eat' the effects of action is a substantial soul. "The person is

only a succession of physical and mental states. There is no vital principle, no self, but only a stream (*saṃtāna*) of minds, consciousnesses, sensations, attachments, intentions, supported by a body endowed with sense-faculties. When the body dissolves, the mental stream reproduces itself automatically and continues in a new womb. There is no transmigration (*saṃkrānti*), but there is a new existence" (*Morale bouddhique*, p. 138; cf. *Nirvāṇa*, pp. 39, 45).

The factors (*dharma*)—real but impermanent entities—whose uninterrupted succession constitutes the stream, are momentary (*kṣaṇika*); but this instability does not hinder the play of the four characteristics of a factor (*dharma*). Although instantaneous, a factor arises through the action (*saṃskāra*) of arising (*utpāda*), lasts or stabilizes itself through continuance (*sthiti*), deteriorates through aging (*jarā*), and disappears through termination (*anityatā*) (MCB v, p. 139). Let us not forget, however, that this momentariness, conceived here as the very short continuance of a factor (*dharma*), is the fact of its mode of existence (*bhāva*), and that the factor itself, in its intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) is permanent.

It remains to explain how the stream so conceived is ripened: the action that 'projects' or 'seizes' its result when it is present, at the moment *A* of the stream, 'gives forth' this same effect, when it is past, at the moment *N* of the same stream.

But the minds in a stream follow one another and yet do not resemble one another: each one of them has an object-support, an aspect, an action of a particular consciousness. How can the mind *N* 'eat' the effect of the action projected by mind *A*?

In the stream, each mind has for its condition the immediately preceding mind <160> which is its condition as the equivalent and immediate antecedent (*samanantarapratyaya*). In addition, in the stream, there exist non-material entities (but non-associated with the mind = non-conscious) which are called 'possessions' (*prāpti*). Every action creates, in the individual who accomplishes [the action], a 'possession of this action'; in the same way, every mind, every attachment creates a possession of this mind and of this attachment. The 'possession', hardly arisen, perishes; but it engenders a 'possession' similar to itself. We continue to possess our actions up to the moment when we 'cut off' the possession of these actions, exactly, up to the moment when we interrupt the unceasing generation of this possession. Thus is explained the fact that an action gives forth its effect to the benefit of the individual who has accomplished it and who retains the possession (*Morale bouddhique*, p. 197; cf. *Kośa*, ii, pp. 179-195).

Finally, we should note that the mental stream can be interrupted in certain cases, notably during the 'absorption of cessation' which we will examine later. But, as the mind before the absorption is the antecedent condition of the mind after the absorption, and as the mental stream is taken up again after the absorption, one can say with the Buddha that 'during the absorption of cessation, the consciousness does not leave the body' (§ 22, n. 72).

AC.
THE VĀTSĪPUTRĪYA-SĀṂMITĪYA SCHOOL

Consult:

J. Masuda, *Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools,* the treatise of Vasumitra (Asia Major, vol. ii, 1925, pp. 53-67); P. Demiéville, *L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'aprés Paramārtha* (MBB., vol. I, 1931, pp. 57-58); *Nikāyabheda* of Bhavya (M. Walleser, *Die Sekten des alten Buddhismus*, Heidelberg, 1927, pp. 77-93); *Kathāvatthu* (in S. Z. Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, PTS., 1915); I-tsing (J. Takakusu, *A Record of Buddhist Religion*, Oxford, 1896); Tāranātha (A. Schiefner, *Geschichte des Buddhismus*, St. Petersburg, 1869, pp. 271-4); Bu-ston (E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism*, vol. II, Heidelberg, 1932, pp. 96-101); Index to the *Kośa*, p. 132.

Principal works:

The *Śāriputrābhidharma*, Nanjio 1268, and the *Saṃmitīyanikāyaśāstra*, Nanjio 1281 (see *Kośa*, Introduction, pp. LX-LXII and J. Przyluski, *Concile de Rājagṛha*, Paris, 1926, p. 73). <161>

Principal doctrines:

Duration and movement (*Karmasiddhi*, § 6, n. 21); the Avipraṇāśa (ibidem, § 18, n. 57); the Pudgala (preliminary notes to *Kośa*, IX pp. 227-9; later, St. Schayer, *Kamalaśīla's Kritik des Pudgalavāda*, in Rocznik Orjentalistyczny, vol. VIII, 1932, pp. 68-93).

ACA.
THE NATURE OF ACTION.

Bodily manifest action or information through the body is not a real entity, a form or matter as the Vaibhāṣikas claim: it is a simple movement (*gati*), a displacement of the body, that is produced through an intention and that informs about this intention.

Arguments are not lacking. If bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*) were a separate substance, distinct from movement, it would have, like all substances, a distinctive characteristic (*lakṣaṇaviśeṣa*), a cause of destruction (*vināśahetu*) and a generating cause (*janakahetu*). Now a bodily act does not manifest any distinctive defining characteristic; it disappears without cause and arises spontaneously. It is thus a simple movement.

But movement, a measure of time, supposes in the moving entity a certain continuance (*sthiti*): the school admits that all factors (*dharma*) are impermanent (*anitya*), but it denies that they are totally momentary (*kṣaṇika*). By virtue of their characteristic of termination, some factors – the mind, sound, a flame – cease immediately (*kṣaṇanirodha*) without the help of external causes: these factors are momentary and are refractory to movement. Other entities – wood, a pitcher, etc. – perish by virtue of the same characteristic of termination, but only with the help of external causes – fire, a hammer, etc. The latter entities are not momentary: they last. Since there is duration, movement is possible. Thus form/matter, the body—with its specific characteristic, its cause of arising and its cause of destruction—truly moves. This movement constitutes bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*) (§ 6, n. 21). <162>

ACB.
THE RIPENED ENTITY.

The Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīyas, who are 'personalists', believe in the existence of a soul (*ātman*), of a person (*pudgala*). They can bring certain passages of the Canon as support for their thesis, like the sermon on the burden and the bearer of the burden (La Vallée Poussin, *Nirvāṇa*, p. 35; *Dogme et Philosophie*, pp. 99-101). Nevertheless, the Canon, in its totality, does not recognize any reality that would exist outside of the impermanent aggregates (*skandha*), with the exception of

Nirvāṇa. This is why the Vātsīputrīyas, in the time period when they elaborated their system, proposed a hybrid definition of the person: the inexpressible (*avācya*) person (*pudgala*), is neither different from the aggregates (*skandha*) which it supports nor identical to them. As it is, this person moves, 'eats' the effect of his or her actions, transmigrates, and arrives at Nirvāṇa.

ACC.

THE MECHANISM OF RETRIBUTION.

For the reasons that we indicate in § 18, n. 57, we are entitled to attribute to the Sāṃmitīyas, among other doctrines, the curious theory of non-disappearance (*avipraṇāśa*): a good or bad action ceases as soon as it arises, but it deposits in the stream of the agent a certain entity called αφθαρσια (aphtharsia; unchangingness, immortality) (*avipraṇāśa*), that is comparable to a sheet of paper on which one registers the debts and that is the claim for its effect (§ 18, n. 57).

The aphtharsia or non-disappearance is a factor dissociated from the mind (*cittaviprayukta*): if it were a mind, it would be good or bad and, consequently, the non-disappearance (*avipraṇāśa*) of a good action could not be found in a bad person, and, vice versa, the aphtharsia of a bad action could not be found in a good person. This is why it is dissociated from the mind, nonconscious, and consequently indeterminate (*avyākṛta*) from a moral point of view. Whether it comes from a good or a bad action, it could thus also reside just as well within the offender as within the saint.

Aphtharsia or non-disappearance is fourfold, for it can claim the effect of action in <163> one of four realms: the realm of desire, the realm of form, the formless realm, or the pure realm.

Constituting a claim for its effect, it always remains but it no longer acts when it has given forth its effect (*phalotpādana*); it does not act when one escapes its effect (*phalavyatikrama*): when, before having tasted the effect of the action, one rises through meditation to a sphere of existence superior to the retribution of the action.

AD.
THE SAUTRĀNTIKA SCHOOL

Consult:

J. Masuda, *Origin and Doctrines*, pp. 66-69; P. Demiéville, *L'origine des Sectes*, pp. 62-63; the *Grub mtha'* in W. Wassiljew, *Der Buddhismus*, St. Petersburg, 1860, pp. 301-314; Tāranātha, p. 58 and foll.; 78, 271, 274; Hsüan-tsang, Si-yu-ki (Julien, I, p. 154; II, p. 213; Beal, I. p. 138; II, p. 302); La Vallée Poussin, the Sautrāntika article in ERE.: Introduction to the *Kośa*, pp. LII-LV, Index to the *Kośa*, s. v. Dārṣṭāntika, pp. 116-7, Sūryodayavādin, p. 138, Sautrāntika, p. 139, *K'ouei ki sur les Sautrāntika* in *Siddhi*, pp. 221-4; Noël Péri, *A propos de la date de Vasubandhu*, BEFEO., XI, 1911, p. 360; J. Przyluski, *Sautrāntika et Dārṣṭāntika*, Rocznik Orientalistyczny, vol. VIII, 1932, pp. 14-24; S. Lévi, *Dṛṣṭāntapaṅkti*, JA., p. 201, 1927, p. 95; H. Lüders, *Bruchstücke der Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā des Kumāralāta,* Kön. Preuss. Turfan-Expeditionen, Klein. Sansk. Texte, II. Leipzig, 1926.

The Sautrāntikas have had a long history in the course of which they received different names: Saṃkrāṇtivādin, Sūtrāntavādin, Sauryodayika, Dārṣṭāntika, Sautrāntika, Sūtraprāmāṇika. They reject the Abhidharma of the Sarvāstivādins and recognize only the sūtras as authority.

We can summarize as follows the scattered information that we possess:

1. In the first century after the Nirvāṇa, the Sauryodayikas (*nyi ma 'char ka pa; je tch'ou louen*) = Dārṣṭāntikācārya or, simply, Dārṣṭāntikas, with Kumārata, (Young Man Head) called Mūlācārya, who composed 900 *śāstras*.

    Principal books:

    The *Kie-man-louen* or the *Yu-man-louen* (*Mālyagranthaśāstra*), the *Kuang-chouo p'i-yu* (Avadāna…). <164>

    Principal theories:

    The wind element moves the body renewed as a stream, and constitutes bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*) (*Karmasiddhi*, § 11, note 31); the form (*rūpa*) of the flesh of the heart (*hṛdayamāṃsarūpa*) contains the seeds of the mind [that arises] subsequent to the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) (root-opinion: *Karmasiddhi*, § 23, n. 74).

2. In the fourth century after the Nirvāṇa, the properly called Sautrāntikas, with Kumārata 'Young Man-Acquisition' = Kumāralāta. His student was the founder of the School (*sautrāntikādi*): Śrīlāta (Excellent Acquisition) = the Kaśmīrian Mahābhadanta Sthavira (according to Tāranātha) = the Sthavira (according to Saṃghabhadra). He composed the *Sautrāntikavibhāṣā*.

    Principal books:

    [*lung*] *dpe'i 'phren ba* (*Dṛṣṭāntamālā); sde snod 'dzin pa'i dpe khyud* (*Piṭakasaṃgrahamuṣṭi*).

    Principal theories:

    Negation of bodily manifest action and of unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) (*Karmasiddhi*, § 3, note 13; § 10; § 12; § 14, n. 36); the subtle transformation of the stream (*Karmasiddhi*, § 20, n. 67); the presence during the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) of a subtle mental consciousness (branch-opinion: *Karmasiddhi*, § 24, n. 77) or of a mind without mental events (variant branch opinion: *Karmasiddhi*, § 26, n. 82).

3. The one who is 'only called Sautrāntika', the Sautrāntika 'easy to know' (K'ouei-ki), the *King-tchou* or 'Sūtrācārya' whom Saṃghabhadra refutes: Vasubandhu, the author of the *Kośa* and of the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* (see below, Section ii). In this last work, he borrows the theory of the Ālayavijñāna from the Sūtraprāmāṇikas (*Karmasiddhi*, § 30, n. 100).

ADA.

THE NATURE OF ACTION.

The Sautrāntikas knew and refuted the theories of the Vaibhāṣikas and of the Vātsīputrīyas on bodily manifest action (*vijñapti*). This, they say, is not a shape distinct from intention, because shape does not exist as such, but results only from a special disposition or arrangement of colors (§ 3-5). Nor is it a movement of the body, because the argument of the Vātsīputrīyas does not withstand <165> examination (§ 6-9), and because movement is impossible (§ 10).

The Sautrāntikas also reject the definitions of their ancestors, the Sauryodayikas and the Dārṣṭāntikas. The wind that moves the body renewed as a stream, does not constitute bodily information/manifest action (*vijñapti*), for they do not see how an irrational element could supply any information whatsoever and constitute a morally qualifiable action, good or bad (§ 12-13).

The Sautrāntikas saw well that any attempt to separate manifest action from intention would be doomed to certain failure. There is no action outside of intention. Consequently the manifest action that the early scholars defined as shape, movement or breath, does not exist; the unmanifest action that derives from it is also totally unreal.

It is therefore important to return to the main principles that the sūtras clearly lay down:

1) action of intention,
2) action subsequent to intention.

There are three types of intention:

i) deliberation-intention (*gaticetanā*),
ii) decision-intention (*niścayacetanā*),
iii) movement-intention (*kiraṇacetanā*).

The first two constitute action of intention (*cetanākarman*); the third constitutes action subsequent to intention (*cetayitvākarman*) of which the Buddha speaks (§ 46 at the beginning, 47 at the end).

i-ii) The first two intentions (deliberation and decision) that are 'actions of reflection' (*manaskāra*) or 'actions associated with reflection' (*manaḥsaṃprayukta*), constitute mental action (*manaḥkarman*) (§ 49).

iii) As for movement-intention, it is twofold: (a) intention that moves the body, called 'bodily action' (*kāyakarman*) (§ 46), and (b) intention that emits the speech (*vāksamutthāpikā*), called 'vocal action' (*vākkarman*) (§ 48).

An example will help us to understand this better. According to the Vaibhāṣikas, Vātsīputrīyas, and Sauryodayikas, there must be two entities in order for there to be a murderer:

1) a murderous intention (mental action) and
2) a murderous act (bodily action) proceeding from the murderous intention, but distinct in itself from this intention, being shape, movement or wind.

The Sautrāntikas distinguish two intentions in a murderer:

1) the murderous intention (mental action) and
2) the intention that moves the murderous arm (bodily action).

If the murderous act were not essentially an intention, <166> it would not be a morally qualifiable action, since intention is at the basis of morality.

Unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) is fully explained in the Sautrāntika system. The two types of intention bearing on bodily acts and vocal emissions – intentions improperly called 'bodily action' and 'vocal action' – are capable of producing an intention *sui generis* that is the unmanifest action (*avijñapti*). The early schools are radically mistaken in affirming that unmanifest action derives from a manifest action (*vijñapti*) that is itself distinct from intention.

ADB.

THE MECHANISM OF RETRIBUTION.

The Sautrāntikas easily refuted the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas who posited the thesis of the efficacy of past action and the existence of the possession (*prāpti*) (above, § ii, 2, 3). When the Buddha affirms the persistence of action, he simply intends to affirm the inevitable characteristic of its retribution. From the terms that he employs, it cannot be concluded that action is permanent, that it 'projects' its effect when it is present, or that it 'gives forth' its effect when it is past. In fact, action is present or past depending on whether it acts or has ceased to act: if past action gives forth an effect, then it acts and is thus present. – In whatever manner one understands 'possession' (*prāpti*), it appears, not as a real entity or a factor in its intrinsic nature, but as an inferred entity, a purely unwarranted invention of a hard-pressed philosophy (§ 15-17).

The entity 'non-disappearance' (*avipraṇāśa*), postulated by the Sāṃmitīyas, also is based on nothing. The phenomena of memory, of ecstasy, or even of arboriculture can be considered in this same way: nothing allows the establishment of an entity that causes the effect, the retribution, to suddenly appear (§ 19).

The mechanism of bearing the ripened effect of action is to be sought in the internal transformation of the mental stream. The action, which is a mind associated with a special intention (see above, § iv, 1), is momentary (*kṣaṇika*): it perishes immediately upon arising. But action 'perfumes' <167> (*vāsanā*) the mental stream (*cittasaṃtāna*) of which it is the starting point; it creates in it a distinctive potentiality (*śaktiviśeṣa*). The mental stream thus perfumed undergoes a transformation (*pariṇāma*) that is sometimes long, the culminating point (*viśeṣa*) of which is a state of the retribution. The process is thus the following: [first] an action (mind), [then] a mental stream in transformation, [finally] a state of the retribution of the action, i.e., the ultimate transformation of the mental stream. In the same way, the seed is the cause of the fruit, but—between the seed and its fruit—there is a linear stream with all of its transformations: shoot, trunk, branch, leaf, flower. When one dyes the seed, the plant gives forth a flower of the same color as the dye, though one would look in vain for this color in the shoot, the trunk or in the leaves (§ 20).

The ingenious theories of the action-seed and of the 'subtle transformation of the stream' are to the credit of the Sautrāntikas, but, other schools before them had expressed pretty much the same hypotheses: the Kāśyapīya-Kassapikas and the Vibhajyavādins recognized only the existence of present action and the past action that has not yet given forth its effect; the Mahāsāṃghikas and the early Mahīśāsakas had caught a glimpse of a theory of seeds (see § 15, n. 45); and the Pāḷi Scriptures distinguish 'active affliction' (*kilesa*), from 'latent affliction/contaminant' (*anusaya*).

ADC. *THE RIPENED STREAM.*

From the above, it follows that the Sautrāntika stream is a mental stream perfumable by the mind and in perpetual transformation. – A second characteristic should be noted: all of the factors (*dharma*) which enter into the composition of this stream—the mental factors and material factors that support them—are instantaneous (*kṣaṇika*): (i) their nature is to perish immediately after having arisen (*utpādānantaravināśisvabhāva*); (ii) their extinction is spontaneous and does not depend on a cause. It is thus immediate, and, contrary to what the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sāṃmitīyas have said, entities do not last even for an instant. <168>

The Sautrāntika stream should not only reply to the demands of psychology and of ethics, but must also conform to mystical experience. There are certain ecstasies and certain heavenly existences in which mind is absent: for example, the absorption of cessation (see § 22, n. 71). If the mental stream is interrupted for a certain time, will not the potentialities deposited in it by perfuming disappear? Will the stream ever arrive at the end of the transformation that assures the retribution? We have seen (above, § ii, 3) how the Vaibhāṣikas replied to this question. The Sautrāntikas took up the problem again and gave different solutions to it.

ADC.1. *ROOT-OPINION OF THE DĀRṢṬĀNTIKAS.*

Two streams are based on one another: (i) the mental life-stream (constituted by the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental consciousnesses) and (ii) the material stream (constituted by the sense-faculties). After having been interrupted during the absorption of cessation, the mental stream rearises from its own seeds which the material stream has retained in it. On the other hand, when one passes from a formless realm where the body was lacking into the two lower realms which presuppose a body, the stream of material sense-faculties rearises from its own seeds which the mental stream has retained in it (§ 23, n. 74).

But it is difficult to see how the material sense-faculties could contain the seeds of the mind, and *vice-versa*. On the other hand, if the states that are called 'without mind' are devoid of any conscious consciousness, they could easily hide a subtle mind (*sūkṣmacitta*), and it is not without reason that the Buddha said: "During the absorption of cessation, the consciousness (*vijñāna*) does not leave the body." Thanks to this subtle mind, the mental stream continues without interruption throughout transmigration or cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*).

ADC.2. *BRANCH-OPINION AND VARIANT BRANCH-OPINION OF THE SAUTRĀNTIKAS.*

Sautrāntika scholasticism has tried to define the subtle mind <169> present in the states without mind.

i) For some scholars, this would be a mental consciousness (*manovijñāna*) devoid of the two mental events of identification (*saṃjñā*) and of sensation (*vedita*);

ii) for others, a mental consciousness without mental events (§ 25, 26).

Everyone agrees in saying that the object-support and the aspect of this consciousness are imperceptible (*asaṃvidita*).

We may ask if the mental stream, even revised, is capable of undergoing the 'perfuming' of action and to move, through an internal transformation, towards the state of the retribution of the action. It is, in fact, a succession of active consciousnesses (*pravṛttivijñāna*): visual

consciousnesses, etc., each having (i) their sense-faculties, (ii) their object-supports, (iii) their particular aspect, and (iv) a definite moral value. It is quite difficult to accept that these consciousnesses are able to influence one another. How could a good mind be affected by affliction? And here again the different explanations proposed by the Sautrāntikas reveal their uncertainty.

i) Some say that the active consciousnesses mutually perfume each other.

ii) Others claim that, in the stream itself, the previous moment (*pūrvakṣaṇa*) perfumes the subsequent moment (*uttarakṣaṇa*).

iii) For still others, the moments of the active consciousnesses change their individual reality, but all these moments are likewise consciousness. The type of consciousness (*vijñānajāti*), [however,] to which [these moments] belong does not change and remains [the same]. It is perfumable and bears the seeds (see *Saṃgraha* in MCB vol. III, pp. 242, 246; *Siddhi*, p. 185).

One must find another entity, and so one wonders whether the mental stream capable of being perfumed and of bearing the seeds could not be a subconsciousness, a 'storehouse-consciousness' that supports the active consciousnesses by retaining the traces (*vāsanā*) that are the seeds (*bīja*) or the powers (*śakti*) of the new active consciousnesses.

For a long time, certain schools had introduced into their psychology certain elements that are not without resemblance <170> to the store-consciousness; let us mention the 'member-of-existence consciousness' (*bhavāṅgavijñānā*) of the Tāmraparṇīyas, the 'root-consciousness' (*mūlavijñāna*) of the Mahāsaṃghikas and the 'aggregate which lasts until the end of Saṃsāra' (*āsaṃsārikaskandha*) of the Mahīśāsakas (§ 35, n. 116-130). But, if we are to believe Vasubandhu, it is the Sautrāntikas, and not the Vijñānavādins, who are to be credited for having first systematized the psychology of ripened consciousness.

ADC.3. THE SUBTLE CONSCIOUSNESS (SUKṢMACITTA) OF THE SŪTRAPRĀMĀṆIKAS.

Through researching the ideas of a 'subtle mental consciousness' and of the 'perfuming of the stream', Sautrāntika scholasticism, after a great many detours and endless self-correction, has built a psychology of the subconsciousness, the support of experience. The school, it seems, has never called the subconsciousness the 'store-consciousness' (*ālayavijñāna*); in the sources at our disposal, it is known under other terms:

1) *Ekarasaskandha*, the 'aggregate of one taste', the cause and the origin of the five adventitious aggregates (*mūlāntikaskandha*);

2) *Paramārthapudgala*, the 'true person' which the *Chu-ki* defines as the "real self (*ātman*), that is extremely subtle and not able to be seized" (see J. Masuda, *Origin and Doctrines*, pp. 68-69); and

3) *Sūkṣmacitta*, 'subtle mind' (§ 30).

Vasubandhu, who adopts this psychology, gives a remarkable presentation of it in § 30-32. There are two types of mind:

i) a multiple mind (*nānācitta*), the six active consciousnesses, and

ii) a store-mind (*ācayacitta*), the subtle mind.

The active consciousnesses and the factors (*dharma*) that are simultaneous with them, good and bad, perfume (*bhāvayanti*) the subtle mind: they deposit therein the seeds of the different consciousnesses and of the different factors (*dharma*). Thus perfumed, the subtle mind forms a store-mind provided with all the seeds (*sarvabījaka*).

The subtle mind 'tames' the seeds deposited in it (it hinders them from ripening); but its 'series' evolves: its power of domination diminishes whereas the force of the seeds increases. <171> The result of the transformation is a state of retribution of the stream, i.e., wherein, finally ripened, the seeds of the consciousnesses and of the good or bad factors (*dharma*) give forth an effect, i.e., produce consciousnesses and agreeable or disagreeable factors (*dharma*). The subtle mind is thus a ripened-effect-consciousness (*vipākaphalavijñāna*).

From birth until death, [the subtle mind] forms a continuous stream that is continued without any interruption. Due to ripening, it passes (*saṃkrāmate*) from existence to existence, taking on different aspects. Arriving at Nirvāṇa, [the subtle mind] is cut off once and for all. Among the Sautrāntikas, this psychology of the subconsciousness fits perfectly with the realistic ontology of the Foundational Vehicle. It was adopted by the Vijñānavādins (Asaṅga) and by some Mādhyamikas (Bhāvaviveka) who adapted it to their, respectively, idealistic or pseudo-nihilistic metaphysics.

AE. *THE VIJÑANAVĀDIN-YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL.*

This school of contemplatives became a philosophical school under circumstances not very well known, but in particular under the influence of Maitreya-Asaṅga, as is well known. Setting aside its mystical aspect (the career of the Bodhisattva with the stages and perfections; the doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha), [this school] appears as a Sautrāntika adapted to an idealistic ontology: the existence of only mind (*cittamātra*). Also, one should note that the doctrine of the existence of only mind, of the nonexistence of matter, is the logical outcome of the Abhidharma theories concerning the 'dominating power' and the 'ripening power' of action.[3] <172>

In their doctrines on action, the Vijñānavādins take up the Sautrāntika theories with some alteration.

1. Action, which is essentially intentional, justifies the doctrine of 'mind-only'.

With the mind as cause, the hand, which is a development of the mind (whatever the Vaibhāṣikas may say), arises and fades away (against the Sāṃmitīyas) in a stream that spreads in space as if it were moving. This apparent movement 'informs', points out the mind from whence it arises. One can thus metaphorically give [this apparent movement] the name of bodily information/manifest action (*vijñapti*).

With the mind as cause, speech or a stream of syllables, a development of the mind, arises and disappears. As the speech appears to 'inform', one metaphorically gives it the name of vocal information/manifest action (*vijñapti*).

The intentions of deliberation and of judgment, actions of the mind, do not entail any development of the mind under an external appearance, and so receive the name of mental action.

Since manifest action (*vijñapti*) is not real, how could unmanifest action (*avijñapti*), which derives from it, exist? However, one metaphorically gives the name of unmanifest action (*avijñapti*), to an intention or to a resolution to do good or bad during a long period of time (see *Siddhi*, p. 50).

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[3] "After the aeon of nothingness or of chaos, the universe is created by the dominating power (*adhipatibala*) of the actions of all the sentient beings of the cosmos during the former 'full' aeon, and this with a view to the retribution of the actions of each of them. In fact, the universe is utilized by the ripening power of the actions of each person in such way that each person tastes the appropriate effect. As—in the extreme strictness of the doctrine of action—we do not experience a sensation (*vedanā*) which is not a consequence of our own actions, we can say that external entities are created only in order to be known or sensed by us.

(i) To suppose that action creates a good thing to eat, in order that—as a retribution of my merit—I may eat it and experience an agreeable sensation in regard to taste, is an unnecessary hypothesis.

(ii) It is simpler to think that the effect of my action is entirely internal: that the good action ripens directly as an agreeable sensation, without having to create for a body, a tongue and something tasty to that end." (*Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna*," *MCB*, vol. III, pp. 153-154).

2. The Vijñānavādins explain the mechanism of retribution by means of the combined play of the active consciousnesses and the store-consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*): they take up and develop the psychology of the 'subtle mind' of the Sautrāntikas.[4]

[4] See *Triṃśikā*, *Saṃgraha* (MCB, vol. III; pp. 169-225), *Siddhi* and the two works: J. Masuda, *Der individualistische Idealismus der Yogācāra-Schule*, Heidelberg, 1926; "*Notes sur l'Ālayavijñāna*" (MCB, vol. III, pp. 145-168).

AF. ## THE MADHYAMAKA SCHOOL[5]

<173> Madhyamaka philosophers follow the 'middle path' between the two positions of philosophical extremes: eternalism and nihilism. This attitude exempts them from declaring themselves on the three great problems of morality: (1) action, (2) retribution, and (3) the ripened entity.

1. From the absolute point of view, one must say that action, a relative entity dependent on an agent, does not 'arise' as a real entity, i.e., it does not exist in and of itself, it is 'empty' (*śūnya*) of any intrinsic nature, of any independent nature. One sees immediately that an entity without intrinsic nature arising from causes that are equally without intrinsic nature, does not arise in reality. One can conclude from this that action does not arise. Without doubt, the Buddha said that actions do not perish, but this does not prove that they exist; on the contrary, they do not perish because they do not arise (*Madhyamakvṛtti*, pp. 323-4).

It is impossible to claim that action arises. If it were to truly arise, one would have to say that it exists as a real entity, and thus that it is permanent. Now, to affirm the permanence of action has absurd consequences. If action were permanent, it would never be accomplished, for a permanent entity, existing always, is not capable being accomplished. If action were to exist without being accomplished, one would be the beneficiary of merit or guilty of an offense without having done anything. If one were to be rewarded or punished unjustly for an action that one has not committed, one always would remain liable to the retribution, for, even after a first retribution, the permanent action would continue to exist. If action were to exist without being accomplished, all work would become pointless: pitchers and fabric would exist before they had been manufactured (pp. 324-6). <174>

All this proves that action does not exist. The cause from which it is produced, namely, affliction, is unreal, for it is based on an innate ignorance. Its effect, for example, the body created by action in the present life, is nonexistent, for one cannot recognize any reality in a body that is created by a nonexistent action produced by a nonexistent affliction. If action does not exist, is it not useless to discuss the agent, the effect and the 'enjoyer' who 'eats' the effect of the action (pp. 326-9)?

2. From the relative point of view, in practice, one should admit that action—although being without intrinsic nature—accomplishes its effect. In fact, it enjoys an efficacy which one would look for in vain in a permanent and unchanging entity.

Action, lacking the intrinsic nature of action, produces an effect as if there were an action. Nothing is impossible to such an efficacy. Scripture indicates the case of magical Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who illusively create food for the community or debate with the monastics. In everyday life, the mirage and dream, nonexistent as real entities, produce illusory effects that are experienced as if real (pp. 329-36).

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5 Bibliography and presentation in "*Réflexions sur le Madhyamaka*," MCB, vol. II, pp. 1-59.

B. *THE KARMASIDDHIPRAKARAṆA.*

BA. *SOURCES.*

For the study of the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, 'Treatise on the Demonstration of Action', by Vasubandhu, we have at our disposal two Chinese translations and one Tibetan translation.

1. *Ye tch'eng tsiou louen* = *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, translation in one book by Pi-mou-tch'e-sien[6] of the Eastern Wei (541); Nanjio no. 1222, Taishō no. 1608, pp. 777^b 16-781^a 21.

2. *Ta tch'eng tch'eng ye louen* = the *Mahāyānakarmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, translation in one book by Hsüan-tsang of the T'ang (651); Nanjio no. 1221, Taishō volume 1609, 781^a 23-786^b 14.

3. *Las grub pa'i rab tu byed pa* = *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, <175> Mdo lviii, no. 8, 156^a 6-168^b 6 (Cordier no. 253, 8; p. 386). Author: Vasubandhu; translators: the upādhyāya Viśuddhasiṃha, and the lo-tsā-ba bhikṣu Devendrarakṣita of rTsangs; corrector: the zhu-chen-gyi lo-tsā-ba vandya Śrīkūṭa.

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There exists a Tibetan commentary on the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* entitled *Las grub pa'i bcad pa* = the *Karmasiddhiṭīkā* or *Las grub pa'i rab tu byed pa'i 'grel pa* = the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇavṛtti*, Mdo lxi, no. 2, pp. 69^a 6-117^b 1 (Cordier no. 256, 2; p. 389). Author: the ācārya bhikṣu Sumatiśīla residing in the great vihāra of Śrīnālandā; translator: the upādhyāya Viśuddhasiṃha, the lo-tsā-ba bhikṣu Devendrarakṣita of rTsangs; corrector: the zhu-chen-gyi lo-tsā-ba vandya Śrīkūṭā.

BB. *NATURE OF THE WORK. EXTERNAL TESTIMONIES.*

The Chinese, as well as the Tibetan tradition, are unanimous to regard the *Karmasiddhi* as a treatise of the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna).

1. In his life of Vasubandhu (T'oung pao, 1904), Paramārtha (499-569) does not mention this work, but Hsüan-tsang (602-664), by the very title of his translation, classifies it among the treatises of the Mahāyāna.

2. The Tibetan tradition (Bu-ston, I, pp. 53-57; Tāranātha, p. 123, 317-8) has drawn up a list of twenty works 'explaining the Scriptures of the last period' and connected with the teachings of Maitreya: the five works of Maitreya, the five volumes of the *Yogācāryabhūmi*, the two summaries of Asaṅga and the eight treatises (*prakaraṇa*) of Vasubandhu.

These eight treatises are five independent works: (1) *Triṃśikākārikāprakaraṇa*, (2) *Viṃśikākārikāprakaraṇa*, (3) *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*, (4) *Vyākhyāvukti* and (5) *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, and three commentaries: (6) on the *Sūtrālaṃkāra*, (7) on the *Pratītyasamutpādasūtra*, and (8) on the *Madhyāntavibhaṅga*. <176>

One can see how poor this list is. As Tāranātha remarked, one cannot assign the name of treatise to commentaries and to a lexical work like the *Vyākhyāvukti*. Further, one may ask in vain why the above-mentioned three commentaries have been chosen from among so many others that are equally attributable to the pen of Vasubandhu.

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[6] Nanjio has reconstructed "Vimokṣaprajñā Ṛṣi or Vimokṣasena (?)" (App. ii. 118); see Bagchi, Canon bouddhique, 267.

The *Karmasiddhi* is presented as 'vindicating the acts of the three means from the standpoint of idealism' (Bu-ston, I, p. 57), probably because it deals with the store-consciousness (§ 33-40) and because the definition of the three actions which it proposes (§ 46-49) is not without resemblance to the exposé given in the *Siddhi*, p. 51.

But in the light of internal criticism, this tradition, as venerable as it may be, cannot be maintained.

BC. *INTERNAL TESTIMONY.*

The *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* is a treatise of the Foundational Vehicle (Hīnayāna) expounding the point of view of the Sautrāntikas.

1. With a single exception, the *sūtras* quoted in this work with or without references all belong to the Canon of the Foundational vehicle.

The author quotes, with the title of the *sūtra*, extracts from the *Daśaparipṛcchāsūtra* on contact (*sparśa*) (§ 27b), from the *Mahākauṣṭhilasūtra* on the three types of contact (*sparśa*) (§ 28) and the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) (§ 29), and from the *Karmapathasūtra* (see note 147) on the first three paths of action (*karmapathas*) (§ 47).

Under the vague reference of '*sūtra*', the author refers to canonical texts:

- *Aṅguttara*, iii, 415, on the three actions (§ 1, 41, 47);
- the famous and ancient stanza: Actions to not perish … (*na praṇaśyanti karmāṇi* …) (§ 15, 41; see note 48);
- *Saṃyuktāgama*, 11, 2; 13, 4 (*Saṃyutta*, ii, 72; iv, 33 et passim) on the collocation of the triad (*trikasaṃnipāta*) (§ 23, 25);
- *Madhyama* (cf. *Majjhima*, i, 296), on the presence of the consciousness (*vijñāna*) in the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) (§ 24);
- *Saṃyuktāgama* 2, 4 (*Saṃyutta*, iii, 96), on 'sensation produced through contact accompanied by ignorance' (*avidyāsaṃsparśajā vedanā*) (§ 25);
- *Madhyama*, 24, 1 (*Majjhima*, i, 53) on the appropriative aggregate of consciousness (*vijñānopadānskandha*) (§ 37);
- *Saṃyutta*, iii, 60, <177> on the aggregate of formations (*saṃskāraskandha*) (§ 37);
- *Saṃyuktāgama*, 10, 7: Factors are not a self and do not belong to a self (*sarve dharmā anātmānaḥ*) (§ 40);
- *Aṅguttara*, i, 230: the three trainings (*śikṣā*) explained to the *Vajjiputtaka* (§ 42);
- *Karmapathasūtra*, compared with the *Saṃcetanīyasūtra* (*Madhyama*, 18, 4; *Aṅguttara*, v, 292; *Majjhima*, iii, 207), on the paths of action (*karmapatha*) (§ 47).

The author quotes twice (§ 32, 37) the *Saṃdhinirmocana*, v. 7, a Mahāyāna *sūtra* that teaches the store-consciousness. But he brings in this work as an illustration of his thesis and not as a scriptural authority. In fact, in § 37 b, he notes that the *sūtras* existing in his time do not speak of the store-consciousness. By a stratagem common enough in exegesis, he claims that *sūtras* of the Foundational Vehicle nowadays vanished would prove the existence of this consciousness.

2. The masters and the schools that the author mentions all belong by name to the Foundational Vehicle: Vasumitra, the author of the *Paripṛcchāsūtra* and of the *Pañcavastuka* (§ 24),

Sauryodayika (§ 11), Tāmraparṇīya, Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka (§ 35). He explains and refutes only theses of the Foundational Vehicle:

- the theories of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas on *vijñapti*-shape (§ 42), on the existence of past action (§ 15-17), on the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) (§ 22);
- the theories of the Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīyas on *vijñapti*-movement (§ 6), on non-disappearance (*avipraṇāśa*) (§ 18), on the self (*ātman*) (§ 40); and
- the theories of the early Sautrāntikas, Sauryodayikas and Dārṣṭāntikas on the *vijñapti*-wind (§ 11), on the absorption of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) (§ 23-26).

Nowhere does he deal with the system of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. The author seems to completely ignore the Mādhyamikas and their 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*), and the Vijñaptivādins and their 'true nature' or 'suchness' (*tathatā*).

3. The positions taken by the author on the three great problems of morality are Sautrāntika positions.

a. He is Sautrāntika when he denies that shape exists distinct from color (§ 4), when he establishes spontaneous destruction (§ 8), when he denies any duration to the factors (*dharma*) and the possibility of movement (§ 10), when he sees in intention the very essence of <178> bodily and vocal action (§ 46-48), and when he makes unmanifest action (*avijñapti*) result from intention and not from matter (§ 14).

b. He is Sautrāntika when he denies the existence of past action (§ 15-17) and when he explains the bearing of the ripened effect of action by means of the subtle transformation of the stream (§ 20).

c. Finally, when he sees in the stream a ripened-effect consciousness perfumed by the active consciousnesses, he adopts, by his own admission (§ 30), the theory of certain Sautrāntikas (*mdo sde pa kha cig*) or—according to the Chinese version—of a certain category of Sūtraprāmāṇikas (*yi lei king wei liang tcho*). Now, the *Vyākhyā* of the *Kośa* defines the Sautrāntikas: *ye sūtraprāmāṇika na tu śāstraprāmāṇikāḥ*: 'those who recognize the authority of the sūtras but not that of the *śāstras*'.

4. The discovery of the *ālayavijñāna* belongs to the Sautrāntikas; the Vijñānavādins borrowed this theory by adapting it to the doctrine of mind-only. The Sautrāntika Ālaya described here is to be distinguished from the Ālaya expounded in the *Saṃgraha* and in the *Siddhi*.

a. Nowhere does it say here that the consciousness, when it arises, develops into two parts (*bhāga, aṃśa*): a perceived part (*nimittabhāga*), the entity seen, and a perceiving part (*darśanabhāga*), the action of consciousness (see *Siddhi*, p. 128; *Viṃśikā*, 9). In other words, our author accepts the reality of the external object-referent (*artha*). Together with the early schools of Buddhism (see *Siddhi*, p. 127), he finds in every consciousness: 1. an object-support (*ālambana*), an external entity; 2. an aspect (*ākāra*) or internal image of this entity; 3. a distinctive (*viśeṣa*) consciousness, action properly so-called. § 37b allows no doubt on this subject.

b. The Ālaya appropriates the body to itself, as defined in § 44: an accumulation of atoms of primary and derived matter. Their reality is not placed in doubt as in the *Viṃśikā*, 12-13, and the *Siddhi*, p. 39.

c. One asks why the Buddha did not teach <179> the Ālaya to his first disciples. In the *Saṃgraha* (MCB, vol. III, p. 203-207), Asaṅga answers as follows:

“The first disciples, the Śrāvakas, had only one goal: to destroy the obstacle of the afflictions (*kleśāvaraṇa*) that are opposed to liberation. To this end, there is no need to accept the store-consciousness, and the Buddha did not mention it in his sermons. Later, the Bodhisattvas, followers of the Mahāyāna, aimed not only to destroy the afflictions, but also to reach the omniscience (*sarvajñatva*) of a Buddha. This omniscience coincides with the non-conceptual cognition (*nirvikalpakajñāna*) for which there is neither an apprehender (*grāhaka*) nor an apprehended entity (*grāhya*). In order to reach [this omniscience], it is indispensable to understand the Ālaya; this is why the Buddha taught it to the Bodhisattvas.”

The Sautrāntika who believes in the reality of the external object cannot subscribe to such an explanation. Our author also, in § 37b, gives a completely different answer. The Buddha, he says, taught only the six consciousnesses; he said nothing about the Ālaya in order to avoid any confusion, because the Ālaya is very different from the common consciousnesses.

In brief, the doctrine of the Ālaya expounded here constitutes a realistic and not an idealistic psychology. Let us note, however, that, towards the end of its history, Sautrāntika realism is almost dead; the wall that separates it from idealism is tottering. There is nothing surprising in that Vasubandhu, the last Sautrāntika, crossed over to the Vijñānavāda: Asaṅga preached to the converted.

BD. AUTHOR AND DATE.

The *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* is the work of Vasubandhu, an enigmatic figure who may be placed, if one wishes, in the fourth century of our era (bibliography in *Kośa*, Introduction, pp. xxiv-viii). His biographers, from Paramārtha up to the authors included in the Lanman collection, demand too much of our credulity: who can believe that Vasubandhu, without even mentioning his acquaintance with the Sāṃkhyā, was a Vaibhāṣika in his youth, a Sautrāntika in his mature years, a Vijñānavādin in his old age, and a Pure Land follower of Amitābha at his death? In our opinion, Vasubandhu lived too long, thought too much, <180> and wrote too much; and before giving one’s opinion on his personality, one should have read, criticized and compared all of his works. We are far from being able to do that.

Limiting our ambitions, let us merely attribute the *Karmasiddhi* to ‘the Sautrāntika Vasubandhu’, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. In fact, in its form and content, these two works are closely related.

1. The first twenty-five paragraphs [of the *Karmasiddhi*] follow directly the example of the *Kośa*; some of them even reproduce [the *Kośa*] word for word. Compare § 4 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 9; § 5 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 11-12; § 24-25 = *Kośa*, i, pp. 212-3. We have noted all these borrowings in the notes to the translation.
2. A clear indication of the interdependence of these texts is the similarity of the comparisons. All [the comparisons of] the *Karmasiddhi* are drawn from the *Kośa*: the variegated cloth (*citrāstaraṇa* or *pipīlaka*), § 4 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 10; the rows (*paṅkti*) of trees (*vṛkṣa*) and of ants (*valmīka*), § 4 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 12; the products of cooking (*pākaja*) due to the action of fire, sun, snow and pungent substances, § 7, 8c, 8e = *Kośa*, iv, p. 7; the flame of the lamp (*dīpajvāla*) and the sound of the bell (*ghaṇṭāśabda*), § 8a = *Kośa*, iv, p. 6; milk (*kṣīra*) and coagulated milk (*dadhi*), § 9 = *Kośa*, v, p. 53; ix, p. 239; wine (*mṛdvīkā*), § 9 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 246; the shadow

(*chāyā*) that moves, § 10 = *Kośa*, i. p. 16; the flower of the lemon-tree (*mātuluṅgapuṣpa*) dyed with lacquer (*lākṣārasa*), § 19, 20, 32, 40 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 299; boiling water (*āpaḥ kvāthyamānāḥ*), § 32 = *Kośa*, iv, p. 8; the arrow (*iṣu*) that falls, § 32 = *Kośa*, ii, pp. 200, 217; iv, p. 102.

3. The *Karmasiddhi* and the *Kośa* are conceived in the same spirit and pursue the same goal: to combat—within the framework of the Foundational Vehicle and relying on the insight of the Sautrāntika—the exaggerated realism of the Vaibhāṣikas and the spiritualism of the Vātsīputrīyas. The author seems to completely ignore the philosophical systems built by the Mahāyāna: the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatāvāda*) of the Mādhyamikas, and the doctrine of idealism (*vijñānavāda*) of the Yogācāras. <181>

Though the *Karmasiddhi* was translated into Chinese in 541, approximately 25 years before the *Kośa*, we are tempted to consider it as later than this work. In fact, [the *Karmasiddhi*] seems to show—in its author—broadened and less hesitant philosophical conceptions, and the presentation and outline is better ordered and more systematic [than in the *Kośa*].

The work may be divided in the following manner:

- A. FIRST PART: ERRONEOUS THEORIES ABOUT THE NATURE OF ACTION (§§ 1-14)
  - AA. MANIFEST ACTION (*VIJÑAPTI*) (§§ 1-13)
    - AAA. THEORY OF THE SARVĀSTIVĀDIN-VAIBHĀṢHIKAS: (*VIJÑAPTI*-SHAPE) (§§ 1-5)
      - AAA.1. Presentation [of the theory] (§§ 1-2)
      - AAA.2. Refutation (§ 3)
      - AAA.3. Conclusion (§ 4)
      - AAA.4. Answer to one objection (§ 5)
    - AAB. THEORY OF THE VĀTSĪPUTRĪYAS, SĀṂMITĪYAS: (VIJÑAPTI-MOVEMENT) (§§ 6-10)
      - AAB.1. Presentation [of the theory] (§ 6)
      - AAB.2. First argument: refutation (§ 7)
      - AAB.3. Second argument; refutation (§ 8)
      - AAB.4. Third argument; refutation (§ 9)
      - AAB.5. Impossibility of movement (§ 10)
    - AAC. THEORY OF THE SAURYODAYIKA-DĀRṢṬĀNTIKAS: (*VIJÑAPTI*-WIND) (§§ 11-13)
      - AAC.1. Presentation [of the theory] (§ 11)
      - AAC.2. Refutation (§§ 12-13)
  - AB. UNMANIFEST ACTION (*AVIJÑĀPTI*) (§ 14)
- B. SECOND PART: MECHANISM OF THE RETRIBUTION OF ACTION (§§ 15-21)
  - BA. THEORY OF THE SARVĀSTIVĀDIN-VAIBHĀṢHIKAS: EXISTENCE OF PAST ACTION (§§ 15-17)
  - BB. THEORY OF THE EARLY SĀṂMITĪYAS: NON-DISAPPEARANCE (*AVIPRAṆĀŚA*)
    - BBA. Presentation [of the theory] (§ 18)
    - BBB. Refutation (§ 19)
  - BC. THEORY OF THE SAUTRĀNTIKAS: TRANSFORMATION OF THE STREAM (*SAṂTĀNAPARIṆĀMA*) (§§ 20-21)
    - BCA. Presentation [of the theory] (§ 20)
    - BCB. Reply to objections (§ 21)
- C. THIRD PART: THE 'STREAM' OR THE RIPENING ACTION (§§ 22-40)
  - CA. PRELIMINARY QUESTION: ABSORPTION OF CESSATION (*NIRODHASAMĀPATTI*) (§§ 22-32)
    - CAA. Opinion of the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣikas (§ 22)
    - CAB. Root-opinion of the Dārṣṭāntikas (§ 23)
    - CAC. Branch-opinion of Vasumitra, of the Sautrāntikas, etc. (§ 24-25)